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# Gender and Race Differences in Juvenile Mental Health Symptoms: MAYSI-2 National Norm Study

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## Research Questions

1. Are there differences between gender and racial/ethnic groups in the reporting of clinically significant levels of mental health symptoms on the MAYSI-2 nationwide?
2. Where differences exist, were these differences consistent (homogenous) across all JJ sites and across demographic subgroups?

## Sample Characteristics

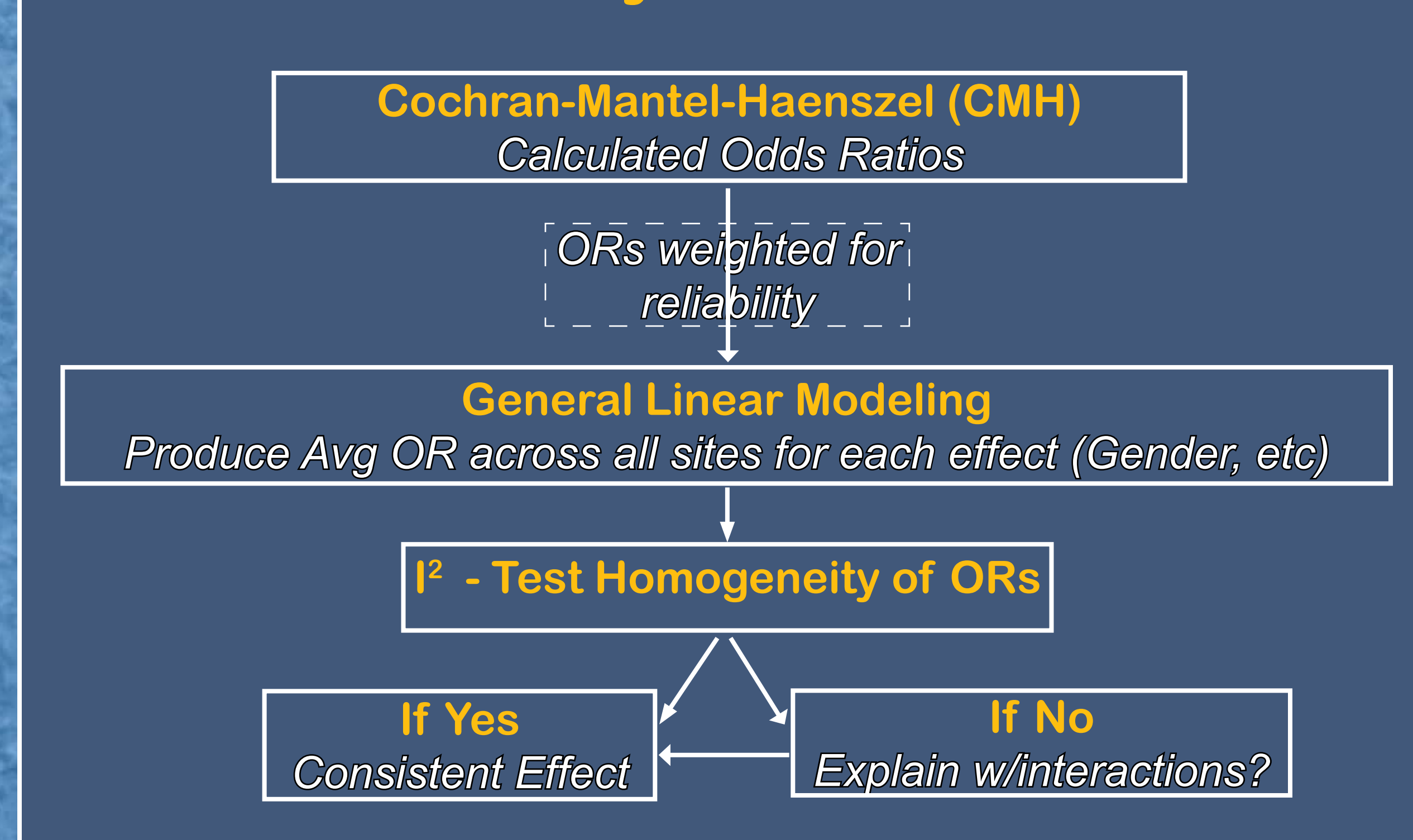
N=70,423 from 283 facilities in 19 states

- ▶ **Gender:** Boys - 78% Girls - 22%
- ▶ **Age (years):** 12-14 - 29% 15-17 - 71%
- ▶ **Ethnicity/Race:** Black - 33% Hispanic - 24% White - 39% Other - >2%
- ▶ **Gate:** Probation - 36% Pretrial Detention - 42% Corrections - 22%
- ▶ **Density:** Urban - 78% Rural - 22%
- ▶ **Region:** West - 17% Midwest - 44% South - 17% Northeast - 22%
- ▶ **Time of MAYSI-2 Administration (hrs after intake):**
  - First few hours - 56%
  - 6 to 24 hrs - 32%
  - =/ > 48 hrs - 12%

## Meta-analytic Procedures

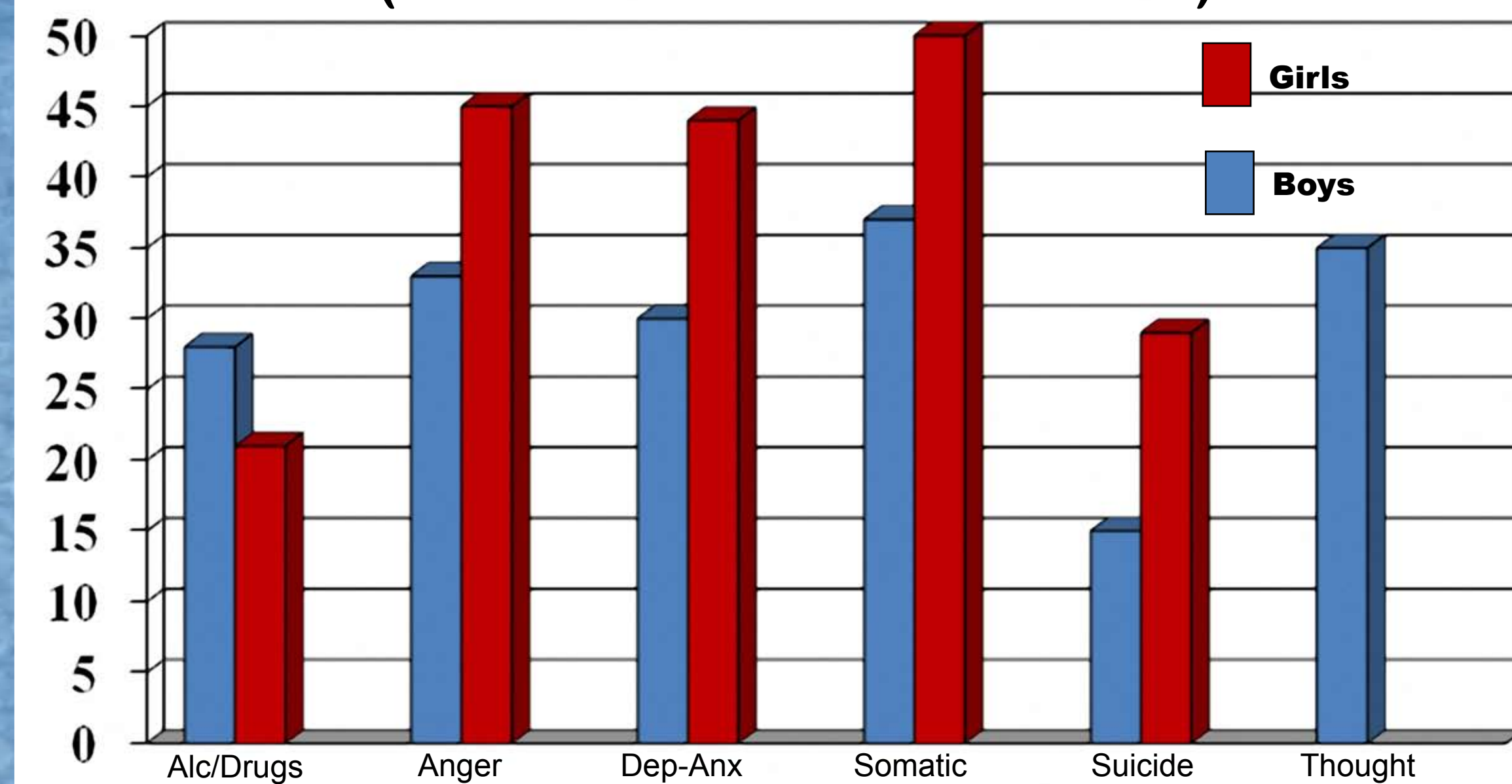
- ▶ Unit of Analysis – Site (JJ Facility)
- ▶ Separate Analyses for Each MAYSI-2 Clinical Scale
  - TRAUMATIC EXPERIENCES not included
- ▶ Examined Odds of Scoring > Caution Cut-offs
  - Past research was done to determine clinically significant levels of disturbance.
- ▶ Variables for Testing Interactions/Controls
  - Gender
  - Age Group (12-14, 15-17)
  - Race (Black, Hispanic, White)
  - Legal Status (pre vs. post-adjudication)
  - Time of MAYSI-2 Administration

## Meta-analytic Procedures



## Aggregate-level Gender Differences

(% Above “Clinical” Cut Off)



## Gender Effect Averaged Across Sites

- ▶ **Large Effects:**
  - Suicide Ideation OR = 2.4
- ▶ **Medium Effects:**
  - Angry-Irritable OR = 1.8
  - Depressed-Anxious OR = 1.95 – 2.14
  - Somatic Complaints OR = 1.8
- ▶ **No Effect:**
  - Alcohol-Drug Problems – OR = 1.04, but interacts with age:
    - 12-14 year olds – girls > boys (OR=1.6)
    - 15-17 year olds – no gender difference

## Conclusions

Girls in JJ were much more likely than boys to report clinically significant levels of symptoms

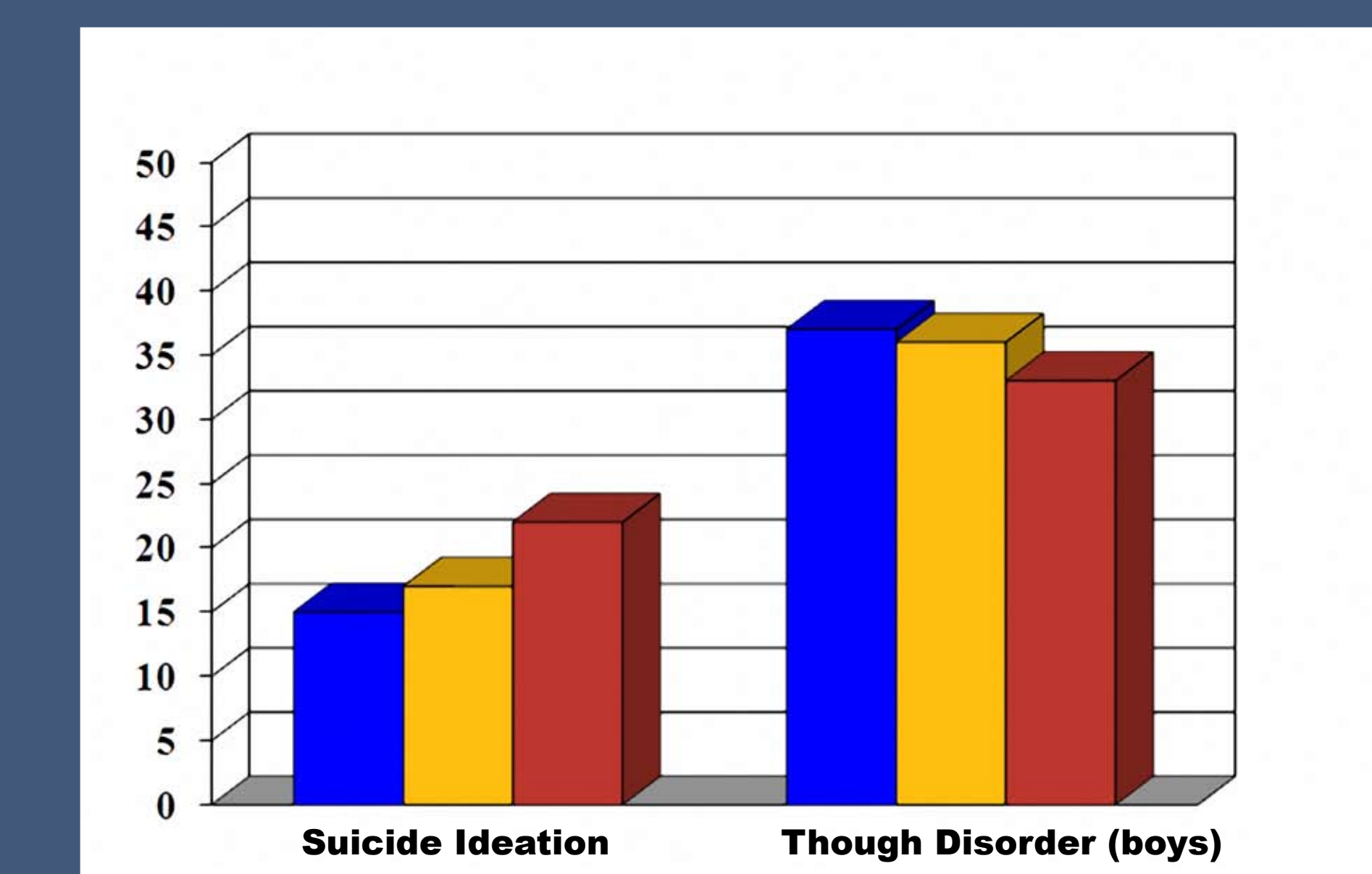
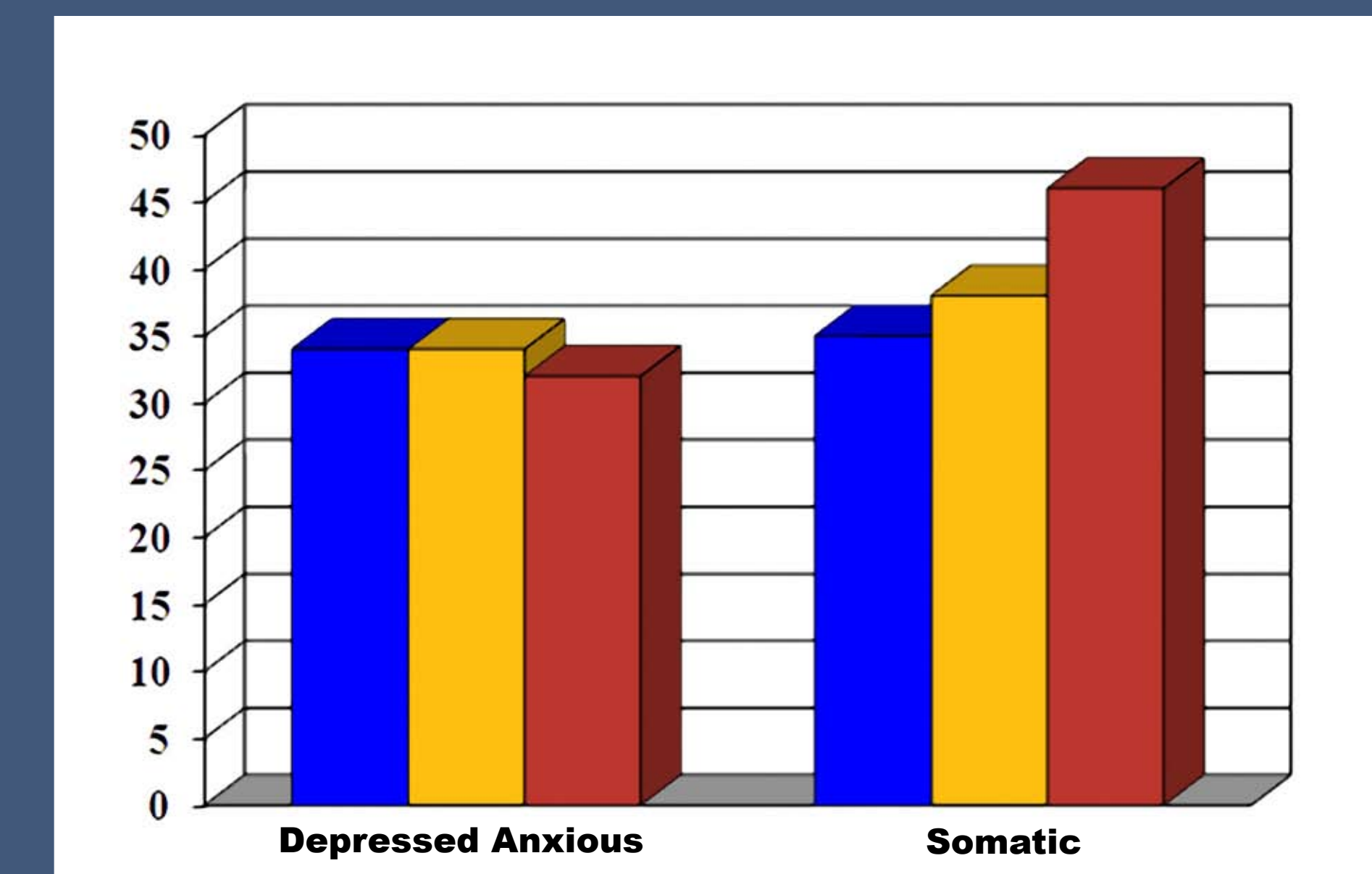
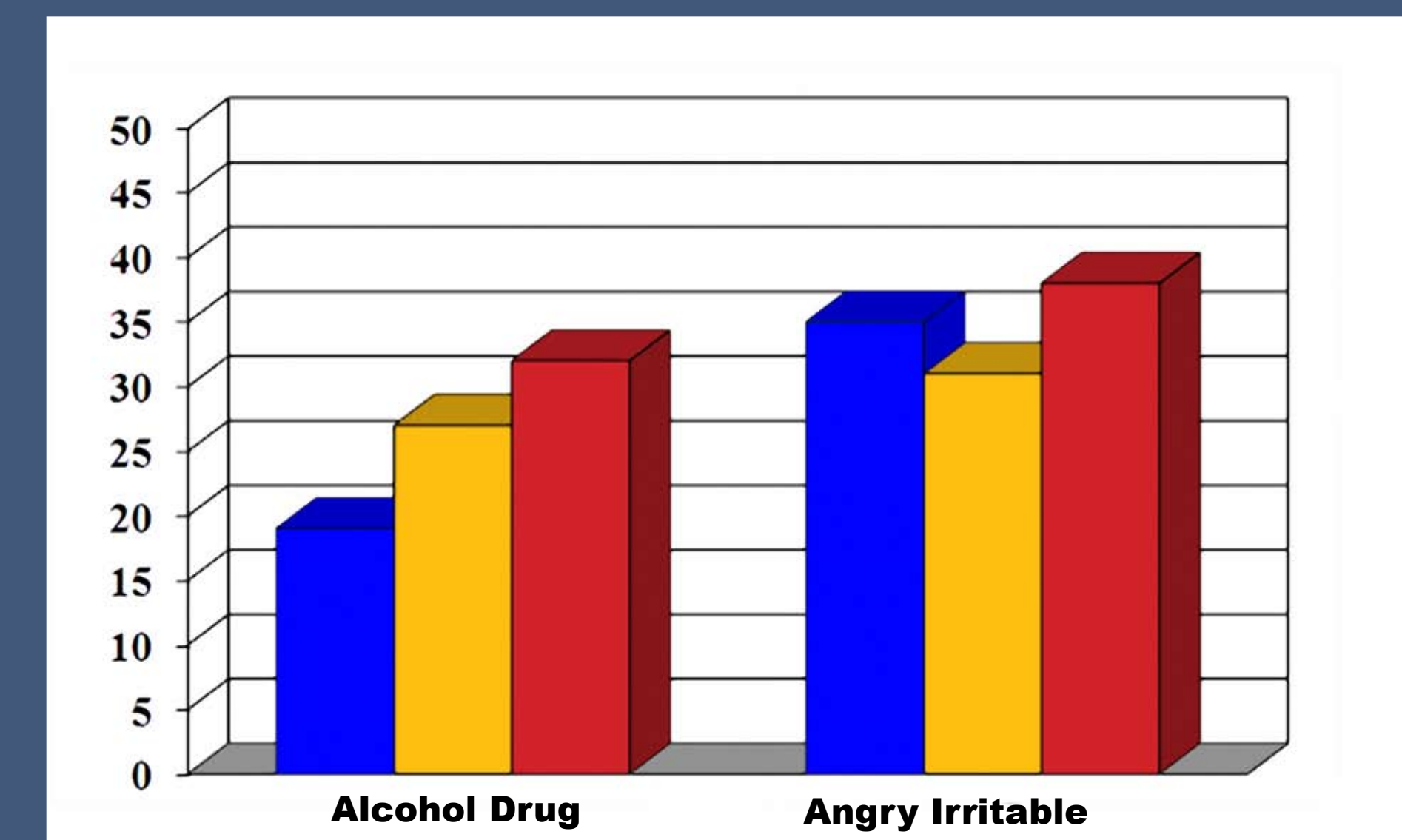
- ▶ Higher rates of symptoms in girls than boys in JJ are not site specific findings – generalizes across the U.S.
- ▶ Even for alcohol-drug use, at least for younger youths

### Implication:

- ▶ Girls who enter the JJ system may represent a more disturbed or difficult subpopulation of girls.
- ▶ Clinicians should anticipate “age-inappropriate” increased risk of substance use among younger girls

## Aggregate-level Race Differences

(% Above “Clinical” Cut-Off)



Black Hispanic White

## Race effect averaged across sites

- ▶ **Some are and Some are Not.**
  - Whites, on average, were more likely to report clinically significant levels of symptoms than Blacks or Hispanics
- ▶ **Medium to Large Effects**
  - Alcohol Drug Scale
    - Whites > Blacks OR = 2.3 Large ES
    - Hispanics > Blacks OR = 1.7 Medium ES
- ▶ **Small Effects**
  - Suicide Ideation (SI) W v. B = 1.45; W v. H = 1.16
  - Somatic Complaints (SC) W v. B = 1.46; W v. H = 1.26

## When Do Racial Differences Vary Across Youths?

- ▶ Findings on the Alcohol-Drug scale and scales other than SI and SC were not consistent across sites
- ▶ Potential moderators in the variability in the magnitude of the odds ratios between Whites & Blacks:
  - Age (larger for older youths)
  - Gate (larger for pre-adjudicated youths)
  - State

## Conclusions

There is wide variability in racial differences across sites

- ▶ White youths were most likely to report problem levels of alcohol or drug use, but the disparity varied widely across gates and states
- ▶ Race effects were non-existent or small on all other MAYSI-2 scales

### Implication:

- ▶ Most race-related differences in JJ were small and in the same general direction as national reports of differences in the community.
- ▶ The alcohol-drug race differences in JJ may be due to “real” community differences, rather than a difference produced by racial discrimination in detention decisions